

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Central District of California

In the Matter of the Search of
(Briefly describe the property to be searched or identify the
person by name and address)

One United States Postal Service Priority Mail
parcel in the custody of USPIS in City of Industry,
California.

Case No. **2:24-MJ-03149**

APPLICATION FOR A WARRANT BY TELEPHONE OR OTHER RELIABLE ELECTRONIC MEANS

I, a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government, request a search warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that on the following person or property (*identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location*):

See Attachment A

located in the Central District of California, there is now concealed (*identify the person or describe the property to be seized*):

See Attachment B

The basis for the search under Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(c) is (*check one or more*):

- ☒ evidence of a crime;
- ☒ contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed;
- ☒ property designed for use, intended for use, or used in committing a crime;
- ☐ a person to be arrested or a person who is unlawfully restrained.

The search is related to a violation of:

Code Section

Offense Description

21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1)	Distribution and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance
21 U.S.C. § 846	Conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance
21 U.S.C. § 843(b)	Unlawful use of a communication facility, including the mails, to facilitate the distribution of a controlled substance

The application is based on these facts:

See attached Affidavit

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

☐ Delayed notice of _____ days (*give exact ending date if more than 30 days: _____*) is requested under 18 U.S.C. § 3103a, the basis of which is set forth on the attached sheet.

/s/ USPIS TFO Zachary Sumpter

Applicant's signature

USPIS TFO Zachary Sumpter

Printed name and title

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by telephone.

Date: _____

City and state: Los Angeles, CA

AUSA: Alexandra Michael, x3756

Judge's signature

Hon. Stephanie Christensen U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

ATTACHMENT A

PARCEL TO BE SEARCHED

The following United States Postal Service ("USPS") parcel is currently in the custody of the United States Postal Inspection Service in Los Angeles, California:

a. **SUBJECT PARCEL** is a USPS Priority Mail parcel bearing tracking number 9505 8157 8643 4117 5942 55. The **SUBJECT PARCEL** is a white colored, large-sized USPS Flat Rate Box. The **SUBJECT PARCEL** is addressed to "Abel Martinez, 1695 Hamner Ave, Norco CA 92860." The return address listed on the **SUBJECT PARCEL** is "TONY GUZMAN, 1302 FANSHAW ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA, 19111." The **SUBJECT PARCEL** was postmarked on April 26, 2024, in the 19149 Zip code.

ATTACHMENT B

ITEMS TO BE SEIZED

The items to be seized are evidence, contraband, fruits, and instrumentalities of violations of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) (distribution of and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance); 846 (conspiracy to distribute or possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance); and 843(b) (unlawful use of a communication facility, including the mails, to facilitate the distribution of a controlled substance) (the "**Subject Offenses**"), namely:

- a. Any controlled substances, including marijuana;
- b. Currency, money orders, bank checks, or similar monetary instruments in aggregate quantities over \$1,000; and
- c. Parcel wrappings, and any associated packaging material.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Zachary Sumpter, being duly sworn, declare and state as follows:

I. PURPOSE OF AFFIDAVIT

1. This affidavit is made in support of an application for a warrant to search the following United States Postal Service ("USPS") Priority Mail parcel in the custody of the United States Postal Inspection Service ("USPIS") in the City of Industry, California, as described more fully in Attachment A:

a. A USPS Priority Mail parcel bearing tracking number 9505 8157 8643 4117 5942 55 (the "**SUBJECT PARCEL**").

2. The requested search warrant seeks authorization to seize evidence, fruits, and instrumentalities of violations of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) (distribution of and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance); 846 (conspiracy to distribute or possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance); and 843(b) (unlawful use of a communication facility, including the mails, to facilitate the distribution of a controlled substance) (the "Subject Offenses"), as described more fully in Attachment B.

Attachments A and B are incorporated by reference herein.

3. The facts set forth in this affidavit are based upon my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from various law enforcement personnel and witnesses. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested warrant and does not purport to set forth all of my knowledge of or investigation

into this matter. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, all conversations and statements described in this affidavit are related in substance and in part only.

II. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

4. I am a Task Force Officer ("TFO") with USPIS and have been so since November 2021. I am currently assigned as a TFO to the Contraband Interdiction and Investigations South Team of the Los Angeles Division, which is responsible for investigating drug trafficking involving the United States Mail. Accordingly, I am an "investigative or law enforcement officer" of the United States within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2510(7). Specifically, I am an officer of the United States empowered by law to conduct investigations of, and to make arrests for, offenses enumerated in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2516. Prior to being assigned as a TFO with the USPIS, I worked patrol as a full-time sworn law enforcement officer with the Chino Police Department.

5. I have received training and have experience investigating violations of state and federal narcotics and money laundering laws. I have been involved in various electronic surveillance methods including state and federal wiretap investigations, the debriefing of informants and witnesses, as well as others who have knowledge of the manufacturing, distribution, transportation, storage, and importation of controlled substances, and the laundering of drug proceeds. I have participated in many aspects of drug investigations, including investigations into the smuggling of

illegal drugs, money laundering, and extortion related to drug trafficking. I am familiar with narcotics traffickers' methods of operation, including the manufacturing, storage, transportation, and distribution of narcotics, the collection of money that represents the proceeds of narcotics trafficking, and money laundering. I am familiar with how drug traffickers use counter-surveillance techniques to avoid detection by law enforcement.

III. SUMMARY OF PROBABLE CAUSE

6. On May 23, 2024, at the City of Industry USPS Processing and Distribution Center in Los Angeles County, California, I identified the **SUBJECT PARCEL** as meeting some of the following criteria common to packages containing contraband, including that it was excessively taped, contained handwritten address information, lacked business account numbers, and, according to law enforcement databases, contained sender and recipient names that were not associated with their respective listed addresses.

7. Additionally, on May 26, 2024, a trained drug detection dog alerted to the **SUBJECT PARCEL** for the presence of drugs or other items, such as the proceeds of drug sales that have been contaminated by drugs.

IV. STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

A. Background on Use of Mails for Drug Trafficking

8. Based on my training and experience as a TFO, and the experiences related to me by Postal Inspectors who specialize in drug investigations, I know the following:

a. Los Angeles is a significant source area for controlled substances. Controlled substances are frequently transported from the Los Angeles area via US Mail, and the proceeds from the sale of controlled substances are frequently returned to the Los Angeles area via US Mail. These proceeds are generally in the form of money orders, bank checks, or similar monetary instruments in an amount over \$1,000. Based on my training and experience, I know that proceeds from the sale of controlled substances often contain the odor of drugs because they have been contaminated by or associated with the odor of one or more drugs.

b. Drug distributors often use USPS Priority Mail Express, which is the USPS overnight/next day delivery mail product, or Priority Mail Service, which is the USPS two-to-three-day delivery mail product. Drug distributors use the Priority Mail Express delivery service because of its speed, reliability, and the ability to track the parcel's progress to delivery. Drug distributors use the Priority Mail delivery service because it provides them more time for travel between states if they decide to follow their shipments to their destination for distribution. Also, by adding delivery confirmation to a Priority Mail parcel, drug traffickers have the ability to track the parcel's progress to the intended delivery point, as if the parcel had been mailed using the Priority Mail 2-Day Service.

9. The following indicia suggest that a parcel may contain drugs or drug distribution proceeds:

- a. The parcel is contained in a Large Flat Rate cardboard box;
- b. The parcel bears a handwritten or typed label, whether USPS Express Mail or Priority Mail;
- c. The handwritten or typed label on the parcel does not contain a business account number;
- d. The seams of the parcel are all taped or glued shut;
- e. The parcel emits an odor of a cleaning agent or adhesive or spray foam that can be detected by a human; and
- f. Multiple parcels are mailed by the same individual, on the same day, from different locations.

10. Parcels exhibiting such indicia may be subject to further investigation, which may include verification of the addressee and return addresses.

11. I know from my training and experience that drug traffickers often use fictitious or incomplete names and addresses in an effort to conceal their identities from law enforcement officers investigating these types of cases. To the extent that real addresses are ever used, it is only to lend a legitimate appearance to the parcel and is almost always paired with a false name.

B. Initial Investigation of the SUBJECT PARCEL

12. On May 23, 2024, I was alerted to the **SUBJECT PARCEL** based on an analysis of USPS business records, which revealed that it was associated with two different parcels that were both seized on May 22, 2024 (collectively, the "May 22, 2024 SEIZED

PARCELS"). I opened the May 22, 2024 SEIZED PARCELS pursuant to a federal search warrant issued in the Central District of California, and they contained a combined total weight of approximately 4,680 grams of suspected fentanyl.

13. Upon reviewing USPS records, I learned that the **SUBJECT PARCEL** was not delivered because the recipient address is unknown, and instead it was designated to be returned to the sender.

14. I intercepted the **SUBJECT PARCEL** while at the City of Industry USPS Processing and Distribution Center. Specifically, I determined the following:

a. The **SUBJECT PARCEL** is a USPS Priority Mail parcel bearing tracking number 9505 8157 8643 4117 5942 55. The **SUBJECT PARCEL** is a white colored, large-sized USPS Flat Rate Box. The **SUBJECT PARCEL** is wrapped in clear tape around its center seam, has handwritten address information, and does not contain a business account number, which based on my training and experience, is common in parcels used by narcotic traffickers. According to law enforcement records¹, the return address listed on the **SUBJECT PARCEL** - "1302 FANSHAWE ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA, 19111" - appears to be a legitimate address but is not associated with the listed sender, "TONY GUZMAN." The recipient address listed on the **SUBJECT PARCEL** - "1695 Hamner Ave, Norco CA 92860" - appears to be a Hotel but is not associated with the listed recipient, "Abel Martinez."

¹ CLEAR is a public information database used by law enforcement that provides names, addresses, telephone numbers, and other identifying information.

C. Drug-Detection Dog Alerts to the SUBJECT PARCEL

15. On May 26, 2024, based on the suspicious characteristics of the **SUBJECT PARCEL**, Chino Police Department Officer Angel Bran had his trained drug detection dog, "Cyra," examine the exterior of the **SUBJECT PARCEL**. I learned from Officer Bran that Cyra gave a positive alert to the **SUBJECT PARCEL**, indicating the presence of controlled substances or other items, such as the proceeds of controlled substances, which have been recently contaminated with the odor of controlled substances. Attached hereto as Exhibit 1, which I incorporate fully herein by reference, are documents setting forth information provided by Officer Bran regarding Cyra's training and history in detecting controlled substances, and the examination of the **SUBJECT PARCEL**.

V. CONCLUSION

16. For the reasons above, there is probable cause to believe that the **SUBJECT PARCEL**, as described in Attachment A, contains evidence, fruits, and instrumentalities of violations of the Subject Offenses, as described in Attachment B.

Attested to by the applicant in
accordance with the requirements
of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by
telephone on this ___ day of May
2024.

HONORABLE STEPHANIE S. CHRISTENSEN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

EXHIBIT 1

AFFIDAVIT

HANDLER ANGEL BRAN AND K9 "CYRA"

I, **Officer Angel Bran**, I have been a Peace Officer since 2013 and have been present at hundreds of drug investigations since the start of my career. I have received formal training from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, Chino Police Department and the California Narcotic Officers' Association on drug recognition and symptomology.

I attended the Adlerhorst Police Dog Handler Course in June 2019 with **Police Service Dog (PSD) Cyra**. I received 240 hours of instruction in basic police dog handling skills. PSD Cyra and I were certified as a patrol team in August 2019. In August 2020, PSD Cyra and I attended the Adlerhorst Police Dog School Drug Detection Class. During this course, PSD Cyra and I receive 240 hours of instruction in the detection of the odor of illegal drugs. In September 2020, PSD Cyra and I passed a certification test in the detection of the odor of illegal drugs. During this course, I personally observed PSD Cyra alert to the presence of the odor of an illegal drug. I am familiar and knowledgeable in the behavior's PSD Cyra engages in when she detects the odor of illegal drugs.

In September 2021, 2022, and 2023 PSD Cyra and I were certified as a patrol team (patrol operations and drug detection) by the Los Angeles County Police Canine Association. In November of 2020, PSD Cyra and I were certified in patrol operations by Adlerhorst. I do continual training with PSD Cyra through Adlerhorst International and out in the field during patrol or training sites hosted by different police departments. The training includes various hiding locations including, but not limited to: vehicles, buildings, bags, parcels, and open areas. This training also includes proofing PSD Cyra on novel odors such as: plastic, boxes, latex, tape, metal, money (circulated and uncirculated) and food. I also proof PSD Cyra off my human odor. This training is on-going and continual.

On 5-26-24 @ 2030 Hours, Postal Inspector Sumpter asked the assistance of PSD Cyra and I in a narcotic parcel investigation. PSD Cyra alerted to the presence of the odor of an illegal drug emitting from the following:

USPS parcel: 9909 8157 8643 4117 5942 55

Addressed to: ABA MARTINEZ
1695 HAMNER AVE
NOBLE CA 92860



K9 Officer Angel Bran ID#3655
 Chino Police Department